

# Language Use among Japanese-Korean Bilinguals with Age as a Determining Factor: Students at a *Chosengakko*, Korean School in Japan

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This paper explores the language use of Japanese-Korean bilingual students at a *Chosengakko* (Korean School in Japan) and, in particular, the determining factor of age. The students have become bilinguals of Japanese and Korean through a Korean immersion program. Though students are encouraged to speak in Korean within the school grounds, the findings of this survey indicate that they also speak in Japanese depending on several factors. I use the data from a questionnaire survey and from the students' actual speech to identify age as a factor in their use of the two languages. While students speak more Japanese with other students in the same grade and lower grades, they speak more Korean with students in higher grades and teachers. Sociocultural reasons may also be a factor.

**Keywords:** bilingual, language use, age, domain, codeswitching

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## 1. Introduction

This paper explores language use among Japanese-Korean bilingual students of a specific *Chosengakko*,<sup>1</sup> a Korean School in Japan, and attempts to explain how their language use changes based on age.

A *Chosengakko* is one type of school in Japan at which students of Korean ethnicity may receive an education. Generally, students at such schools have been born and raised in Japan. When they enter the school, they learn the Korean language and other subjects

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<sup>1</sup> *Cosenhakkyo* (조선학교, 朝鮮学校) in Korean.

in Korean as a medium of instruction; they speak Korean in school, following a school policy for the improvement and maintenance of their heritage language. These surroundings facilitate their Japanese and Korean bilingualism.

Kim (1991) and Pak (2013) found that *Chosengakko* students and graduates speak Korean under limited conditions: they speak Korean mostly in school, and Japanese mostly at home. However, there have not been further studies on how schoolchildren speak both languages, or in what situations they speak either or both. This research begins from such questions. New speech data are analyzed and the study intends to show that the language use of *Chosengakko* students changes with age, from the viewpoint of domain and codeswitching.

### 1.1. Domain

Bilinguals' speech exhibits many interesting phenomena, especially in terms of the choice and use of multiple languages. Sometimes bilinguals speak in one language, sometimes in another, and sometimes in two languages within one sentence. What determines this behavior? What makes a difference? Here we can consider two concepts, which are related-issues: domain and codeswitching.

Domain was introduced as a way of identifying patterns of language use.<sup>2</sup> According to Spolsky, a domain is an empirically determined cluster consisting of a location, a set of role-relationships, and a set of topics (1998: 46). Some examples are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Domain (Spolsky 1998: 47)

| Location     | Role-relationships                    | Topics                               |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Home         | Mother, father, son, daughter, etc.   | Domestic, personal, etc.             |
| Neighborhood | Neighbor, shop-keeper, street-cleaner | Weather, shopping, social greetings  |
| School       | Teacher, student, principal           | Social greetings, educational        |
| Church       | Priest, parishioner, etc.             | Sermons, prayers, confession, social |

And Spolsky notes the following:

“Because domains are composite concepts, there is the possibility of conflict and therefore marked choice between languages. Thus, two people who normally speak the standard language at work might use their home language there to signal either a change of role-relation (family member or friend rather

<sup>2</sup> According to Fishman (1971: 586), Georg Schmidt-Rohr seems to be the first to suggest the domain-related concept in the 1930s. Fishman takes the concept from Schmidt-Rohr. Fishman, as well as other scholars, later further developed this concept. Fishman originally used the term “domains of language behavior” in his article.

than co-worker) or topic (a home or neighborhood topic) while still being in the some [*sic*] location” (Spolsky 1998: 48).

Speakers’ use of two languages thus varies according to domain. They can vary their speech according to interlocutor, place and topic. Between the same interlocutors, their role-relationship can change—and the particular role-relationship could influence speakers to use a different language or register. Here we can also consider the interlocutors’ age as another possible factor.

## 1.2. Codeswitching

Codeswitching is a frequently observed phenomenon in bilingual conversations. According to Milroy and Muysken (1995: 7), codeswitching is “the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation.” In Gumperz’s (1982: 59) version, it is “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems.” An example of codeswitching can be found in Poplack’s (1980) thesis title:

(1) Sometimes I’ll start a sentence in Spanish Y TERMINO EN ESPAÑOL.<sup>3</sup>

The title begins in English, then switches into Spanish. This illustrates the way codeswitching can occur in the middle of a sentence, called ‘intrasentential switching.’ Sometimes codeswitching can occur from one sentence to the next, which is called ‘intersentential switching.’ There are other types as well. The focus of this study will only consider intrasentential switching.

In bilinguals’ speech, there is a similar phenomenon called ‘borrowing.’ It looks similar to codeswitching in that a speaker uses an element from a different language within a sentence or the same stretch of speech in a particular language. If the part which originated from the other language is phonologically adapted to the language of the rest of the speech, it is considered borrowing, not codeswitching, in the collected data for this study.

## 2. *Chosengakko* and their linguistic environment

In Japan, there are several kinds of schools for children of *Zainichi Korean* parents,<sup>4</sup> or ‘Korean residents in Japan.’ My research participants attend a *Chosengakko*, a type of

<sup>3</sup> The subtitle, “Toward a Typology of Code-switching,” is omitted from (1).

<sup>4</sup> There are several ways of classifying the Koreans in Japan. Here let us refer to them as two groups, based on the period of time when they came to Japan: *oldcomers* and *newcomers*. The *oldcomers*, a term coined in Japan, are the Koreans who came to Japan around or during the time when the Korean Peninsula was under Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945. The *newcomers* are the ones who arrived after 1965, when South Korea and Japan decided to

schools educating people of Korean ethnicity in Japan. *Chosengakko* can be found throughout Japan, from Hokkaido to Kyushu. Currently, there are 4 kindergartens and 62 schools that include elementary, middle, and high schools, and one university.<sup>5</sup> Those who teach at these schools are typically graduates from the university, and have passed through the same courses as their students.

Besides *Chosengakko*, there are other kinds of Korean schools, including *Kankokugakko* and *Minzokugakkyu*. *Kankokugakko*<sup>6</sup> are supported by the South Korean government and *Mindan*, a South Korea-leaning organization. These are located mostly in metropolitan areas such as Osaka and Tokyo. There are a total of 6 such schools. Depending upon the district, these schools may have *oldcomer* students as well as *newcomers*. However, the backgrounds of the newcomers vary by region; they have different linguistic backgrounds because of their parents' jobs and from living in many countries. Another type of Korean school is a *Minzokugakkyu*. Unlike the other two schools, a *Minzokugakkyu* is part-time school, usually held on weekends or after school. These are concentrated in the Osaka area.

In contrast, students who attend *Chosengakko* have relatively homogenous backgrounds compared to students from other schools. They have been born and raised in Japan, as their parents. Usually each *Chosengakko* has its own community, with the school often acting as a community center. In addition to the students and teachers, people who belong to these communities, such as graduates and other adults with Korean ethnicity, come to the schools for sports events and BBQ parties. Moreover, the school and its community typically have various exchanges with the local Japanese community, such as through soccer games, bazaars, and other events. These are all situations in which students have opportunities to interact with other people.

One of the main characteristics of *Chosengakko* is that the curriculum consists of a total Korean immersion program. Students grow up speaking Japanese until going to school at age 6 or 7. As soon as they start school, they begin to formally learn Korean. Through Korean language immersion, they become Japanese-Korean bilinguals. The teachers encourage them to speak in Korean during classes and other school activities.

Although students learn their heritage language through school, Japanese is the first language for these students and even for their teachers, including parents and community members. They have few opportunities to interact with people from the Korean Peninsula

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restore diplomatic relations. Usually the earlier Koreans, the *oldcomers*, are called *Zainichi Korean*, which means 'Korean people in Japan', or sometimes just *Zainichi*. In general, most of the *Chosengakko* students belong to families of *oldcomers*.

<sup>5</sup> From the website of Soren/Chongryon: <http://www.chongryon.com/j/cr/link3.html> (Accessed: 2019-07-27).

<sup>6</sup> Hangukhakkyo (한국학교, 韓国学校) in Korean.

or Korean native speakers due to sociopolitical reasons.<sup>7</sup> These circumstances have made their Korean different even from Korean dialects on the peninsula.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Data

Since 2010, I have conducted research on language use in one *Chosengakko* (which I henceforth refer to as K-School), which is located in the Kanto area. I have collected data through questionnaire surveys, speech data collection, participant observation, interviews, and other methods. The data focused on in this study are mainly from questionnaire surveys and speech data collection.

#### 3.1. Research participants

K-School offers elementary and middle school programs, and has nearly 50 students in total. This population changes every year because the number of enrolled students and graduates fluctuates. Data were collected from the elementary school students in the fourth grade and above, and from all of the middle school students. Most students were born and raised in the local area, and some moved from a different area of Japan. They all started school in the *Chosengakko*'s elementary school program.

#### 3.2. Questionnaire survey on domain

A questionnaire survey was taken by all the middle school students, 14 in all, in 2011. Based on previous research indicating that their language use differs when they are in versus outside of school, questions were included that asked which language they speak depending on their interlocutors as well as their location. The results are given in Table 2, and visually represented in Figure 1.

Table 2 Results of survey question #1: Locations

|                 | School | Etc. | Home |
|-----------------|--------|------|------|
| Korean Only     | 11     | 0    | 0    |
| Mostly Korean   | 2      | 3    | 1    |
| K-J Equal       | 1      | 1    | 0    |
| Mostly Japanese | 0      | 8    | 12   |
| Japanese Only   | 0      | 2    | 1    |

<sup>7</sup> As the Korean Peninsula is divided in two, the Korean society in Japan is also divided into two, or sometimes more, groups. Two of the largest Korean political organizations in Japan are *Mindan* and *Soren*. *Mindan* supports South Korea, while *Soren*, or *Chongryon* in Korean, supports North Korea and also runs all of the *Chosengakko* schools.

<sup>8</sup> Their Korean has many linguistic characteristics which seem to have been affected by contact with the Japanese language, according to previous studies (Ito 1989, 1997; Pak 2007; Watanabe 2018).

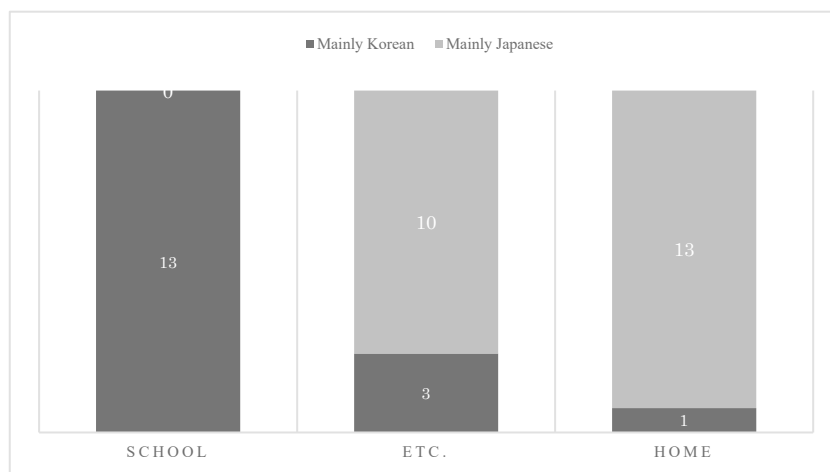


Fig. 1 Language use by location

The survey results demonstrate that location has a significant role in language use. School is the location where students speak Korean more than in any other place. In contrast, when away from their school, at home or other places, they use more Japanese. This does not imply that only Japanese is employed outside of school. We can infer from the answers that, to some extent, they use Korean outside of school, as well. This likely indicates that they encounter Korean speakers even when they are not in school. This result echoes previous studies from Kim (1991) and Pak (2013) indicating that students from *Chosengakko* use more Japanese than Korean at home, and more Korean at school.

In addition to examining the effect of location on language use, this study investigated whether the language use of the students changes when the location changes, but with the same interlocutor(s). These results are given in Table 3.

Table 3 Results of survey question #2: Interlocutors and locations

|                 | In School |        |          |         | Out of School |        |          |         |
|-----------------|-----------|--------|----------|---------|---------------|--------|----------|---------|
|                 | Lower G   | Same G | Higher G | Teacher | Lower G       | Same G | Higher G | Teacher |
| Korean Only     | 6         | 6      | 8        | 11      | 1             | -      | 3        | 10      |
| Mostly Korean   | 8         | 7      | 6        | 3       | 7             | 7      | 6        | 2       |
| K-J Equal       | -         | 1      | -        | -       | 2             | 4      | 2        | -       |
| Mostly Japanese | -         | -      | -        | -       | -             | -      | 1        | -       |
| Japanese Only   | -         | -      | -        | -       | -             | 2      | -        | -       |

The figures in Table 3 show that the location of speakers makes a difference. Students on the whole speak mostly Korean at school, regardless of their interlocutor. However, usage changes when outside of school. When students speak to those in higher grades (Higher G) and to teachers, there is a slight difference, yet they still use more Korean with those interlocutors compared to others. In contrast, students in the same grade (Same G) and lower grades (Lower G) use less Korean, as suggested by the decrease in the number

of *Korean Only* responses compared to the increase in the number of *K-J Equal* and *Japanese Only* responses. That is, these students use more Japanese, especially with others in their same grade. A salient finding here is that students do not speak mainly in Japanese when talking to teachers.

### 3.3. Volume of the two languages in actual speech

Actual speech data was also collected at K-school. The video- and audio-recorded data was taken during math class, fishing, and mobile game-playing situations.

Some samples from the speech data are given as follows.<sup>9</sup>

- (2) il            pwun            man            te            cwuseyyo  
       one        minute        just            more        give-HON.OPT  
       ‘Please give me another minute.’
- (3) AACHAA-NO        SOKUDO-YORI        HAYAI  
       archer-GEN        speed-than            fast  
       ‘This one is faster than Archer’s speed.’
- (4) OMAE        DONDAKE        SETSUYAKU        #ha-ko isse  
       you            how much        saving            #do-HAB  
       ‘Why do you keep saving that?’

The data here exhibit three kinds of sentences. The utterance in (2) is only in Korean. The utterance in (3) is only in Japanese. The last type, in (4), is that of codeswitching-like sentences, in which Japanese features and Korean features together in one sentence. Only the number of Japanese features that appear were counted and analyzed, for reasons of efficiency, since the students’ utterances are made in the school context, in which they usually speak Korean.

With this method of analysis, there were three possible ways for each sentence to be coded. First, if more than half of the total number of morphemes were in Korean, the sentence was coded as Korean. Second, if more than half of the total number of morphemes were in Japanese, the sentence was judged to be Japanese. Third, when the number of Japanese and Korean morphemes was even, the sentence was labeled ‘undecided’.

<sup>9</sup> In this paper, Korean is Romanized in small letters, following the Yale system. For Japanese, the Hepburn romanization system is adopted and written in all capital letters.

Table 4 Results of speech collection: Japanese sentence rates

| Interlocutor \ Scenes | Math class (2011; 40 min) |                           |                            | Fishing (2013; 30 min) |                           |                            | Mobile games (2015; 5 min) |                           |                            |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
|                       | Total sentence sum        | No. of Japanese sentences | Rate of Japanese sentences | Total sentence sum     | No. of Japanese sentences | Rate of Japanese sentences | Total sentence sum         | No. of Japanese sentences | Rate of Japanese sentences |
| Teacher               | 43                        | 0                         | 0%                         | 91                     | 1                         | 1.1%                       | -                          | -                         | -                          |
| Higher Grades         | -                         | -                         | -                          | 79                     | 1                         | 1.3%                       | 41                         | 3                         | 7.3%                       |
| Same Grades           | 7                         | 0                         | 0%                         | 34                     | 3                         | 8.8%                       | 18                         | 5                         | 27.8%                      |
| Lower Grades          | -                         | -                         | -                          | 192                    | 11                        | 5.7%                       | 90                         | 69                        | 76.7%                      |
| Talking to oneself    | 2                         | 0                         | 0%                         | 34                     | 5                         | 14.7%                      | 3                          | 2                         | 66.7%                      |
| Unclear               | -                         | -                         | -                          | 3                      | 0                         | 0%                         | -                          | -                         | -                          |
| Undecided             | -                         | -                         | -                          | 60                     | -                         | -                          | 13                         | -                         | -                          |
| Sum                   | 52                        | 0                         | 0%                         | 493                    | 21                        | 4.3%                       | 165                        | 79                        | 47.9%                      |

During math class, 0% of the utterances were Japanese sentences. However, during the fishing and game-playing scenarios, more Japanese sentences occurred. More Japanese sentences occurred when the students were talking with other students in the same grade and lower grades, while fewer Japanese sentences occurred when they were talking with students in higher grades and to teachers.

### 3.4. Codeswitched sentences

We were able to observe codeswitched sentences in K-School's bilingual students' speech data. The types of data analyzed for this codeswitching behavior are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 Data analyzed for codeswitching

| Period    | Duration | Location      | Specific Activity     |
|-----------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|
| JUL, 2013 | 45 min   | School camp   | Fishing               |
| JUL, 2013 | 35 min   | School camp   | Outdoor games         |
| JUL, 2013 | 15 min   | School camp   | Walking to a campsite |
| FEB, 2015 | 5 min    | Community day | Mobile game           |
| JUL, 2017 | 40 min   | School camp   | YouTube watching      |
| JUL, 2017 | 11 min   | School camp   | Breakfast time        |
| JUL, 2017 | 37 min   | School camp   | Lunch time            |
| JUL, 2017 | 36 min   | School camp   | Outdoor games         |

From the data, 160 codeswitched sentences occurred and were classified into several types. One type was 'Japanese grammatical element + Korean verb *hata* (mean. 'do')'.<sup>10</sup> Another type was the use of a Japanese sentence-final particle, such as NA, NE, or YO, within a Korean sentence.

<sup>10</sup> In analyzing and classifying the CS types, I did not encounter any counterpart cases of 'Korean grammatical element + Japanese verb SURU (mean. 'do')' in the data.



- (2) MINARAI                    *#hala*  
 learn-NMLZ                    *#do-IMP*  
 ‘You should learn from them.’
- (3) *i-nom*                    *#TEIKA*                    *#hayyo*  
 this-thing                    *#decrease*                    *#do-INTRG*  
 ‘Is this one decreasing in power?’
- (4) *kulehta#NA*  
 correct#MP  
 ‘You are right.’
- (5) *Na-hako*                    (PSN) *hyengnim*                    *huynsayk#NE*  
 me-and                    (PSN) brother-HON                    white color#right-INTRG  
 ‘Me and (personal name) got white ones, right?’

The 160 tokens of codeswitching were organized depending upon the language each sentence begins or ends in. These groupings (shown in Table 6) indicate that more sentences beginning in Japanese occurred compared to sentences beginning in Korean (J102: K58). Moreover, many more sentences ending in Korean occurred compared to those ending in Japanese (K128: J30).

Table 6 Numbers of codeswitched sentences

| JPN-Beginning |     | KOR-Beginning |    | JPN-Ending  |    | KOR-Ending  |     |
|---------------|-----|---------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|-----|
| Alternation   |     | Alternation   |    | Alternation |    | Alternation |     |
| J-K           | 82  | K-J           | 17 | K-J         | 17 | J-K         | 82  |
| J-K-J         | 10  | K-J-K         | 33 | J-K-J       | 10 | K-J-K       | 33  |
| J-K-J-K       | 8   | K-J-K-J       | 3  | K-J-K-J     | 3  | J-K-J-K     | 8   |
| J-K-J-K-J     | 2   | K-J-K-J-K     | 5  | J-K-J-K-J   | 2  | K-J-K-J-K   | 5   |
| Sum           | 102 | Sum           | 58 | Sum         | 32 | Sum         | 128 |

These findings do not yet confirm a correlation between ending types and bilinguals’ language use. However, the results seem to show that these bilinguals tend to finish their sentences in Korean when codeswitching. There is a possibility that when they are talking, they may notice in the middle of utterance that they are using Japanese, but might feel that they must use Korean because they are in a Korean-use context, and therefore try to at least end the sentence in Korean. There appears to have been no such research on this particular aspect to date.

I next investigated whether there was a difference in the codeswitching depending on the age of the interlocutor. Table 7 provides the data based on whether the interlocutor is older than the student or not.

Table 7 Codeswitched sentences by age of interlocutor

| Interlocutor | Number    |
|--------------|-----------|
| [+elder]     | 25        |
| [-elder]     | <b>93</b> |
| Unclear      | 26        |
| Undecided    | 16        |
| Sum          | 160       |

As the results in Table 7 show, codeswitched sentences occurred 25 times when students were speaking to others in higher grades or to teachers, while they occurred 93 times when students were speaking to others in the same or lower grades. The interlocutors' age therefore appears to be a factor affecting the students' codeswitching.

#### 4. Summary and discussion

This study demonstrated that the language use of school age students changes according to domains such as interlocutor and location, based on data from questionnaire surveys and actual speech data that includes instances of codeswitching.

The results of the questionnaire survey show that students use more Korean with other students in higher grades and with teachers, while they use more Japanese with other students in the same and lower grades. They mainly use Korean overall.

The data analysis of Japanese sentence rates showed that students use more Korean with interlocutors in higher grades and with teachers, while they use more Japanese with students in the same and lower grades, again mainly using Korean as the language of communication.

Finally, this study found that while the students codeswitched less with students in higher grades and with teachers, they codeswitched more when speaking with students in the same and lower grades.

Why do the students at K-School use more Japanese or codeswitch more with students who are not older than them? Moreover, why do they use more Korean or codeswitch less with senior students and teachers? They are in a situation where they are expected to speak in Korean and have been instructed to do so.

As mentioned earlier, the teacher-pupil status differential is significant. Students understand that the teacher's role is to teach and guide the students. Thus, this relationship could promote or force students to use Korean, or to at least use more Korean, and to codeswitch less than when interacting with others. What about interactions with students in higher grades? What groups them with the teachers as interlocutors who are more frequently spoken to in Korean?

A possible explanation for this is that age creates a kind of mental distance and affects the speaker's language use. When speaking Korean, the age of the interlocutor determines how the language should be used. To people of the same age and younger people, it is

normal to use the *hanta-* or *hay-*form, which are casual forms in the Korean language. In contrast, to those who are older, even with just a one-year difference, unless the interlocutor specifically says it is okay not to use, it is expected that the *hapnita-* or *hayyo-*forms will be used. These polite forms are used as a way of showing respect and/or a way of avoiding a face-threatening act. So the age of the interlocutor pressures Korean speakers, and this pressure makes them decide which forms to use; therefore, sometimes age makes people feel psychologically distant. Could this be the reason students were found to use more Korean with other students who were in higher grades?

Another theory that could be used to account for this phenomenon is the Japanese concept of *uchi-soto*, as illustrated in Figure 2.

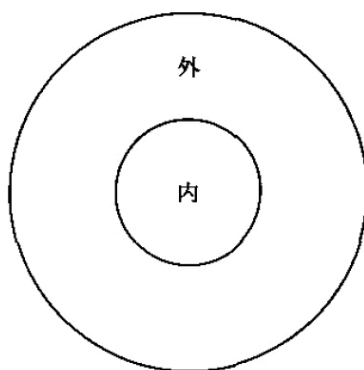
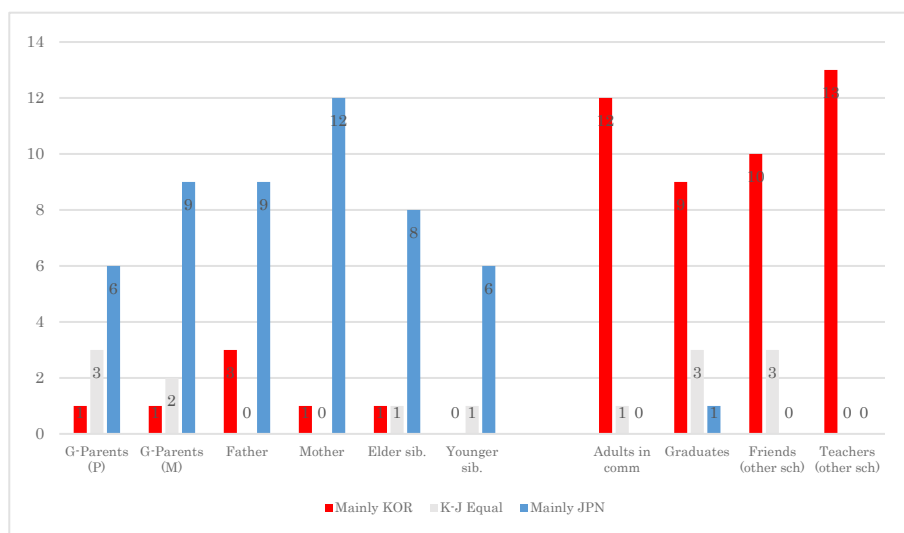


Fig. 2 *Uchi-Soto* model (Miyake 1994: 30)

*Uchi* literally means 'inner side' or 'inside', and *soto*, 'outer side' or 'outside'. *Uchi* refers to people inside the circle, which may include people such as family, relatives, or friends and *soto* can be used to refer to colleagues, acquaintances, or anyone outside the inner circle. These designations can change depending on interpersonal relationships. Japanese people tend to use polite forms when talking to the people in the *soto* sphere, who are not close enough, while they tend not to use, or to hardly ever use, such polite language when talking to the people in the *uchi* sphere, who they feel close to and comfortable with. With this *uchi-soto* distinction, age does not matter. Rather, it is about the relationship, or the closeness between individuals. *Chosengakko* students are native speakers of Japanese, living in Japanese society, so they may be using the concept of *uchi-soto* to determine their linguistic behavior.

The results of another survey question, which asked about *uchi-soto* and language use, are given in Figure 3.

Fig. 3 *Uchi-Soto* and language bias

This survey question asked students which language they use with their family and with people in the community. Here the *uchi-soto* concept can be used to account for students' language use with others: more Japanese and less Korean are used for *uchi*, while more Korean and less Japanese are used for *soto*.

Students use more Japanese with their family, with whom they feel more comfortable. They are not obliged to show respect to their own family members. This likely makes them feel more natural speaking Japanese because it is their mother tongue, although they also sometimes use Korean as part of their Korean ethnic culture. This would include the students in the same grade and lower grades.

In contrast, students likely feel pressure in conversation with students in higher grades, though not as much pressure as they feel from teachers. They likely feel obligated to speak more in Korean than when talking to the students in the same grade and lower grades.

It is possible that students' language use may be influenced by age through a combination of the Korean language system and the *uchi-soto* distinction.

## 5. Conclusion

This article discussed how K-School students' language use changes in terms of age. The results have shown that students speak mostly in Korean within school, while they also speak in Japanese. Depending upon the particular relationship, they speak more Japanese and less Korean with students in the same and lower grades, and more Korean

and less Japanese with students in the higher grades and with teachers. In their language use, age as a sociocultural factor seems to determine which language they use.

There was no opportunity for follow-up interviews with the school children about the results. It would be important to also hear the speakers' opinions for future studies.

For this study, data were only drawn from one *Chosengakko* school. It is necessary to conduct more research at other *Chosengakko* schools in order to be able to generalize the results to other *Chosengakko* schools. This case could be a cornerstone for further studies.

### Abbreviations

|       |                        |      |                |
|-------|------------------------|------|----------------|
| #     | codeswitching boundary | MP   | modal particle |
| GEN   | genitive               | NMLZ | nominalizer    |
| HAB   | habitual               | OPT  | optative       |
| HON   | honorific form         | PSN  | personal name  |
| IMP   | imperative             |      |                |
| INTRG | interrogative          |      |                |

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